

CN 57

X/13 CURT -- ERLANDER WILL NOT VISIT RUSSIA

STOCKHOLM, SEPT 4 -- (RFE SPECIAL/HENRY) -- SWEDENS PRIME MINISTER TAGE ERLANDER HAS NO INTENTION OF PERSONALLY FULFILLING SOVIET PREMIER ALEXEI KOSYGINS INVITATION TO PAY AN OFFICIAL VISIT TO THE SOVIET UNION, BUT THIS IS NOT RPT NOT PRIMARILY DUE TO THE INVASION OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA, ERLANDERS OFFICIAL SPOKESMAN SAID TODAY.

THE SPOKESMAN GAVE THIS INTERPRETATION TODAY, FOLLOWING SOME CONFUSION OVER THE PRIME MINISTERS TELEVISION STATEMENT MONDAY NIGHT WHEN ERLANDER SAID HE "IN ALL PROBABILITY WOULD NOT RETURN" KOSYGINS VISIT TO SWEDEN IN JULY.

THE QUESTION WAS PUT TO ERLANDER IN CONNECTION WITH THE EVENTS IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA, AND THE REPLY COULD HAVE BEEN INTERPRETED AS IMPLYING THAT ERLANDER HAD DECIDED AFTER THE INVASION NOT TO RETURN KOSYGINS VISIT. IN THE JOINT COMMUNIQUE OF JULY, ERLANDER HAD ACCEPTED KOSYGINS INVITATION TO MOSCOW, WITH NO DATE FIXED.

HOWEVER, THE SPOKESMAN TODAY SAID THAT ERLANDER "ACCEPTED IN PRINCIPLE" IN JULY. HE SAID THAT ERLANDER DOES NOT EXPECT TO BE PRIME MINISTER BEYOND 1970, WHEN SWEDENS FIRST UNICAMERAL PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS WILL BE HELD, AND THAT A TRIP TO THE SOVIET UNION WOULD "HARDLY BE ARRANGED DURING THIS INTERIM ANYWAY."

THE SPOKESMAN ADDED THAT ERLANDER WAS "DISAPPOINTED AND DISCOURAGED" BY THE INVASION OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA, PARTICULARLY AS KOSYGIN HAD AGREED IN THE JOINT COMMUNIQUE THAT THE PRINCIPLE OF NON-INTERVENTION WAS A FOUNDATION FOR PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE IN THE WORLD.

THIS DISAPPOINTMENT, THE SPOKESMAN SAID, "CONTRIBUTED TO THE CERTAINTY" THAT ERLANDER WOULD NOT BE VISITING THE SOVIET UNION. IT WAS ALSO NOTED THAT THERE IS A CHANCE ERLANDER WILL NOT BE PRIME MINISTER ANYWAY AFTER THE SECOND PARLIAMENTARY CHAMBER ELECTIONS OF THIS MONTH, DEPENDING OF THE OUTCOME.

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